

There is concern about close to \$400,000 that the Corporation for National Service has spent in training and development funds. We are going to be having hearings next week to take a look at the \$13 million that the Corporation for National Service spends every year in training and technical assistance.

There are fundamental weaknesses at the corporation. This is not debating whether the kids and the young people are doing good work, but they are doing it for an agency that does not have good financial controls, and they are doing it at a very expensive cost. The average cost for an AmeriCorps volunteer is about \$27,000 per member.

□ 2245

A GOOD PRIORITY FOR THE NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILCHREST). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. TIAHRT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the amendment that just passed the House before we closed business for this day because it does establish a very good priority for this Nation and for this Congress.

We, for once, for the first time, I think, since the gulf war at least, we have established that gulf war illness is going to be a priority when it comes to solving or finding a cure for this illness that has been plaguing so many of our gulf war veterans.

We did so by making a good compromise to what we had before in the bill. What this amendment did basically is it took half the funding from the National Service Corporation and it transferred it to the veterans research account so that we can focus on the gulf war illnesses.

Let me tell my colleagues a little bit about it. In Kansas, we have got several people, quite a few people that are currently suffering from this. I want to thank first of all Dan Thimesch from the 93d District of Kansas. Representative Thimesch brought this very important issue to my attention and provided me with a lot of information on what is going on in Kansas.

He told me about Sgt. David Janda, a 35-year-old father of three from Hutchinson, KS, suffering from blinding headaches and a blistering rash. He has had this problem for 6 years. It includes chronic diarrhea and joint pain.

He talked to me about Kenny Schwartz of Great Bend who endures a stabbing pain in his left eye and stiffness in his joints. He has memory loss and scarring rashes.

Now we find out in that in Kansas that some insurance companies have decided that this is a war-related illness and they are going to be denying coverage based on a clause in their health insurance contract that says any health-related problems as a result

of war will not be covered by health insurance, so it leaves these people without coverage. But now we have a way of finding out a cure for these illnesses because of the research money that we are putting in place.

We are, in exchange, we are cutting back on a program that is largely inefficient and ineffective, AmeriCorps. It is a troubled organization and it does need to improve. And I hope through the course of this debate that we have had tonight, that Members are aware that there need to be advances in the way AmeriCorps conducts business.

Right now they are suffering a 39-percent dropout rate across the United States. They have unauditable books. They only expend 11 percent of the money that they are allocated by the Federal Government. Since its conception, we have allocated \$1.6 billion to AmeriCorps. Out of that \$1.6 billion, only approximately \$300 million has been spent or set aside for their trust fund for education that they have promised to the people that have participated in the program, the paid volunteers.

That leaves about \$1 billion, over \$1 billion that has yet to be expended. So if AmeriCorps was actually cut off today and no funds were allocated by this Congress, the 105th Congress, AmeriCorps could continue for 5 to 10 years just on the money that they have been already budgeted but not yet spent because of their inefficiency.

So it is an organization that needs to look at itself. I think they need to evaluate the trends they are using, the direction they are headed. Perhaps they need to rewrite their vision statement and come up with a more effective way of addressing the idea, the concept that they had in mind when it first came into service. It is this inefficiency, and in comparison to the great need of this illness that gulf war veterans are suffering from, that brought on this decision that we have made tonight of balancing the two.

The President is strongly in support of AmeriCorps. It has kind of been his pet program. And the amendment that was put in place tonight does satisfy the need that he has to have paid volunteers in government service, and it also provides a solution to the need that we have for more research on gulf war illness.

I think it was a good compromise that was reached tonight. It was not the original intent that I had when I put the amendment forward, but in this business it seems like sometimes we have to come up with the best solution to the problem, the best solution available that we have to the problem, and I think that we have accomplished that tonight.

I hope that this bill will pass when we get done with the amendment process at the end of the week, and that we can have not only a solution for our gulf war illnesses but also have a more effective AmeriCorps.

S. 768—MEILI FAMILY RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I want to explain my support for S. 768, and say why this private bill serves an important public purpose.

In January, Christopher Meili made a simple moral choice. When he found financial records documenting accounts opened by European Jews while the Nazis were in power, he could have ignored them. He was a security guard at the Union Bank of Switzerland, and he could have followed orders. He could have allowed the records to go to the shredder, to oblivion.

Instead, Meili made a choice. He gave the records to Jewish leaders, to help them document the problem of assets stolen from the heirs of Holocaust victims. It's true that theft is less egregious than murder, greed less evil than race hatred. But justice demands a reckoning, a settling of accounts. Christopher Meili's choice placed him on the side of those against forgetting, in favor of justice.

Christopher Meili's employer, the Union Bank of Switzerland, acknowledged that an employee had destroyed records in a regrettable incident. But the chairman accused Meili of having some other motive than morality or compliance with a Swiss law mandating preservation of these records.

Christopher has also received death threats. He has had to leave his homeland, with his family. I support Christopher Meili's moral choice, and I support this bill.

ECONOMIC SITUATION FACING THE NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] is recognized for half of the time remaining until midnight as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to talk about a situation facing our Nation that brought many of us out of the private sector a couple years back and brought us here to Washington, DC, in the first place.

Several years ago we made the decision to sell our business and take the funds and use the funds to run for Congress, because we were very concerned about the growing debt facing this great Nation of ours, a debt of almost \$5.3 trillion facing this country today. And quite frankly, we were very, very concerned about the broken promises that had been made to this Nation time and time and time again. We wanted to see things be different in our capital.

This evening I would like to begin by differentiating between debt and deficit so that we comprehend that we really have two separate problems here. The first one is the deficit. The second one is the underlying debt.

What has been going on now since 1969, for a full generation, since I was a sophomore in high school, is that our Federal Government has been collecting tax dollars from the American people and literally, one can think of it as

putting those tax dollars into the big government checkbook. And then they have been writing out checks for all kinds of different programs. Many of us would call some of them wasteful, but for many different programs they wrote out these checks. They overdrew their checkbook every year. That overdrawing of the checkbook is called the deficit. That is the amount of money we spend more than what we take in every year.

When we hear the conversation about balancing the Federal budget, what we are really talking about is getting to a point where the number of tax dollars coming in to Washington equals the number of dollars being written out in those checks to all of these different programs.

It is almost inconceivable for most families in America that for a full generation now this Government has gotten away with literally overdrawing their checkbook year after year after year after year, literally for an entire generation. What we are really saying here is that since 1969, every single year the Federal Government overdrew their checkbook; that is, they wrote out more checks than what they put money into it.

So what has the Government been doing? That leads us to the second problem. This overdrawing of the checkbook, again, what is called the deficit. What they have done is they have literally gone and borrowed the money that their checkbook was overdrawn. So each year they write out more checks than what they take in. That is called the deficit.

Then they borrow the money to put in the checkbook that they did not collect in taxes. Over a period of time, as would seem logical, they keep borrowing more and more and more money and just like in any family in America, if you overdrew your checkbook every week and you went to the bank and borrowed some money, then the next week came along and you overdrew your checkbook again and you went to the bank and borrowed some money, then the next week came and this kept going on and on and on, our Nation has been doing this now since 1969. What happens eventually is you accumulate a pretty large debt. In fact, that is what has happened in this great Nation of ours today.

The debt facing this country today, we can see from this chart just how fast it has been growing. One can see from this chart just exactly how fast the Federal debt facing this great Nation of ours has been growing. From 1960 to 1980 it is almost a flat line. The debt did not grow very much at all. But from 1980 forward the debt just started climbing right off the chart.

What brought many of us to Washington, DC is, as we watched this debt rise, we are about at this point on this debt chart right now. The debt is a very, very serious problem. The debt is that amount of money that every year when they overdrew their checkbook,

they kept going to the bank and borrowing more and more and more money, generally in the form of T-bills. Eventually that debt piles up, and that is what brought many of us here to Washington, DC.

The amount of debt facing our Nation today is \$5.3 trillion. The amount of debt facing our Nation, it looks like this. It has a 5 and a 3 and a whole bunch of zeros after it. But to many people that number is so big, myself included, that it is hard to comprehend. So let me do what I used to do in my math classrooms when I used to teach math. I used to take the amount of debt and divide by the number of people in the United States of America.

What one would find, if they did that, is that the amount of money that the Federal Government has borrowed on behalf of the American people is the same as \$20,000 for every man, woman and child in the United States of America. Let me put that another way. The Federal Government has spent \$20,000 more than it collected in taxes basically over the last 15 years for every single man, woman and child in the United States of America. For a family of five like mine, I have got three kids at home and my wife happens to be out here for a short time this week, but for a family of five like mine, they have literally spent \$100,000 more than they took in.

When they spent this extra money, they just kept going to the bank and borrowing the money. This is not a lot different than it would be in any household in America today. If in your household you overdrew your checkbook week after week and you went to the bank and borrowed and borrowed and borrowed until eventually the amount of money that you borrowed for a family of five added up to \$100,000, it is not hard to figure out that the bank is going to ask you to do something about that \$100,000. And, in fact, what is happening in America today is our families are being asked to spend \$580 a month to do nothing but pay the interest on that debt that has been accumulated on behalf of a family of five.

Let me say that again. Every single family of five or group of five people in the United States of America today is sending \$580 a month to Washington, DC to do absolutely nothing except pay the interest on that Federal debt.

A lot of people go, "Well, I don't have to worry about that. I don't pay that much in taxes. I don't have \$580 withheld out of my paycheck every month." But the reality of this whole situation is, it is not just the income tax that pays this \$580 a month. Every time a person in this Nation walks into a store and buys something as simple as a loaf of bread, the store owner makes a small profit selling that loaf of bread.

So when they collect that money for the loaf of bread from our family, part of that money is profit to the storeowner. When the storeowner makes a profit, of course, the Govern-

ment taxes that profit, and part of that money that was paid for the loaf of bread winds up out here in Washington, DC.

The fact of the matter is this: When the family of five in America today looks at all the money that they are paying in taxes through all the different parts of society where they pay taxes, the gasoline pump, income taxes, taxes on products that they buy in a store, when they look at all the taxes, that family of five is, in fact, spending \$580 a month to do nothing but pay the interest on the Federal debt.

Tonight we are going to be talking about a bill called the National Debt Repayment Act. What it does is it starts addressing this huge problem of paying off the Federal debt so that our families will no longer have to send \$580 a month to Washington, DC.

Let me talk briefly about where we have been in this Nation, what brought us to this huge change that has occurred in the last three years, and then talk a little bit about the future.

Let me start with the past. I emphasize, this is the past. The past is what brought many of us to Washington, DC, in the first place. I would emphasize this is before 1995. There was another party in control of the House of Representatives and there was another party in control of the Senate.

Things were very different back then. In the late 1980's, they started making promises. They, the Members here in Washington, DC, the Members that were running this institution, they started making promises to the American people.

Some may remember these promises were called the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act of 1985. In the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act of 1985, this blue line shows what they said was going to happen to the deficit, what the people here in Washington promised the American people they were going to do to bring this deficit down until, in fact, we had a balanced budget in 1991. Again, a balanced budget, that means they were not going to overdraw their checkbook anymore after 1991.

They made that promise to the American people. They said logically we cannot go on overdrawing our checkbook every year, so they laid this plan into place called Gramm-Rudman-Hollings. The red line shows what they actually did. This is what they promised. This red line shows what they actually did.

The deficits exploded, so instead of keeping their promises to the American people and balancing this budget by 1991, they said, well, we cannot keep that promise. So what we will do is, we will just try and hoodwink the American people. We will give them another promise.

So, in 1987, they set out a new series of promises and gave us another promise to get on a balanced budget, this time by 1993. Only 2 years into the plan or a year and a half into the plan they

realized that they did not want to do that either, because in order to get to a balanced budget they would have had to control the growth of spending out here in Washington DC, and that they did not want to do.

Again, I emphasize, this is the past. This is before the American people made a huge change in this Nation in the elections of 1994. These broken promises are part of what led up to the changes in 1994. But this is not the end of it.

It is not just these broken promises of a balanced budget, where instead of balancing the budget the deficit skyrocketed and they overdrew their checkbook year after year after year after year. That is not the end of it.

In 1993, they looked at this picture and they said, well, we promised the American people in 1991 and we promised them again in 1993, and it is obvious we are not going to get the job done. So what they did out here in this city angered Americans again. They said, the only thing we can do is raise taxes on the American people. We do not have it within ourselves to control the growth of Government spending. Instead what we will do is raise taxes on the American people.

So, in 1993, we saw the biggest tax increase in American history. How much are we talking about here? Well, the gasoline tax went up. Every time you fill your car up with gasoline, they tried to convince us that it was a tax increase only on the rich, but you were rich if you stopped at the gas pump and filled your car up. It was an increase in the Social Security tax.

So, in 1993, and again I emphasize this is before the American people changed what was going on, in 1993 we had a series of broken promises. And they concluded in this city that the way to solve this problem is to reach into the pockets of the American people, take more money out and bring it out here to Washington, because they thought that the Members here in Washington knew how to spend the people's money better than the people did themselves.

□ 2300

So they raised taxes. So here we are. This is pre-1994 and pre the American people changing this institution.

We had broken promises of a balanced budget, we had the biggest tax increase in American history and the American people changed it. The people in Washington did not change it, the American people changed it. What they did was they turned over the Congress. They put a new group of people in control here in Washington, DC, and things are very different from 1995.

With that discussion, I want to go into the present. I want to call the present from 1995 to where we are right now, today, and just look at exactly how different the present is from this picture of the past. Again the picture of the past, the failed promises of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings that were to

balance the budget, and the tax increases of 1993.

Let us just look at how much things have changed. We are now in the third year in Washington. Right now we are in the third year of a 7-year plan to balance the Federal budget. In 1995 we promised the American people again that we would reach a balanced budget by the year 2002. Many people heard about this. What has not been reported to the American people very well is what kind of progress is being made on this promise, because it is very different than Gramm-Rudman-Hollings.

It amazes me that here in Washington the people that seem to have trouble understanding why it is the American people out there are so cynical and so angry at this institution. Well, the reason they are angry is because of those failed promises of the past and the conclusion that the right way to solve problems is to reach into the pockets of the American people and take out more money.

Then 1995 came and we had a different theory. The theory went like this. Instead of reaching into the pockets of American people and bringing more money to Washington, why do we not curtail the growth of Government spending in Washington? Why do we not let the people keep more of their own money?

Here is what happened. We did curtail the growth of spending in Washington, and when we curtailed the growth of spending, that meant that Washington borrowed less money. When Washington borrowed less money out of the private sector, that meant there was more money available. With more money available in the private sector, the interest rates stayed down.

And there is where it gets to be very non-Washington. When the interest rates stayed down, our families could afford to buy a home and a car, and they did. They bought the American dream. They started living the American dream again. When they bought more houses and cars, of course that meant people had to go to work building the houses and cars. And when people went to work building the houses and cars, of course, that meant they left the welfare rolls and started paying taxes in.

How is our plan working? I think that is what we need to look at here. How different is 1997 and the first 3 years of this new group of people in control of the House of Representatives and the Senate? How different really is it? Well, we are in the third year of a 7-year plan to balance the budget. It is not like the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings and the failed promises.

The chart I have here shows the 1996 promise. Remember, we put this together in 1995, starting with fiscal year 1996. We promised the people that our deficit would not be taller than this red column, would not be greater than \$154 billion. Well, 1996 came and went, and actually the deficit dropped to 107. The blue column shows the actual deficit. The red column shows the promise.

I hope that everyone watching can see the difference between this and what was promised in the past. We are not only on track in 1996 but we are also ahead of schedule.

Well the second year came, and we are now pretty much through the second year and into the third year. The second year, we promised the American people the deficit would not be bigger than this red column. We are not only on track again, but we are well ahead of schedule; as a matter of fact, \$100 billion ahead of schedule.

We are now in the third year, and that is what is currently being discussed out here in Washington. When folks hear about the balanced budget plan, it is now a 5-year plan, or even getting to a point where people talk about a 4-year plan. We are now in the third year of this 7-year plan to balance the Federal budget, and I would point out again that the red column is what was promised the American people. The blue column is where we are actually at.

I hope that the contrast here between the promises of the past that were broken before 1994 and before the people that came in 1995, I hope it is clear that this new ownership of the American people of this institution, and it is ownership of the American people that is what this body is supposed to be all about, that the new group of people that the American people sent out here to run this place are not only on track keeping their promises to balance the Federal budget in a 7-year plan, they are significantly ahead of schedule.

Folks, the time has come to recognize that this new group of people that is running the House of Representatives and the Senate is a tribute to the American people, not the people that are here, because the American people sent this new group out here, but they sent them here dead serious about balancing the budget. They sent people like myself with no previous political experience, never held an office before in my life, but we knew and understood, if we made a promise to the American people we better keep it, because that is what this is all about.

We are in the third year of this plan now, the third year of the plan to balance the Federal budget. We are not only on track, but we are ahead of schedule. But there is another very stark contrast we should draw the attention of the American people to, and that other stark contrast is the fact that in 1993 they were raising taxes.

We are now at a point in our plan where we have curtailed the growth of Government spending to a point where we both are going to balance the budget, probably much sooner than the year 2002, but we can lower taxes on the American people. And that is what we are in the process of doing.

Now, this is Washington, so we have begun a heated debate here about whether or not we should lower taxes on people who do not pay income taxes, and that is an interesting debate. But

when I get back to Wisconsin and I ask folks if they really think people that are not paying income taxes ought to receive an income tax cut, most of them start laughing, because out there that does not make a lot of sense.

Like our debate on AmeriCorps this evening, where we are paying people to volunteer, some folks start to ask the question, If we are paying people to volunteer, is it still really volunteerism or is it a real job? But we will leave that to another date and time to begin that discussion.

The point is we are in the third year, ahead of schedule, and we are in the process of undoing what was done in 1993 with the biggest tax increase in history. So the new group is on track to balance the budget, and we will get there not only before the year 2002, but we are also lowering taxes.

I want to spend a few minutes talking about how those taxes are going down, but first I would like to yield to my good friend from Michigan [Mr. HOEKSTRA], and perhaps he would like to debate or discuss tax cuts, because I think they are good news for all of America.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I have ever debated my colleague from Wisconsin. Too often I find myself in agreement with my good friend from across the lake.

I just wanted to reflect on the numbers that the gentleman has been laying in front of us tonight. Number one, the significant progress that we have made over the last 3 years, where there is talk about getting to a surplus budget much sooner than the year 2002, which I think will be wonderful.

We are also going through this process to reduce taxes, and we will have in place a plan to save Medicare. And so we are doing many of the right things.

I think the other thing that we need to be talking about, and I know the gentleman wants to talk about tax cuts, but also about how we are spending the money. The gentleman brought up AmeriCorps. There is still tremendous opportunity to improve Washington. We have gotten spending under control but we have not gotten effectiveness and efficiency under control.

Mr. NEUMANN. That is very true, and I brought another chart with me. This is somewhat surprising to many of the American people. They have heard so much about these draconian cuts that are being made here in Washington, DC, that when I show them this chart, it kind of is staggering, in fact, of what is actually still happening here in Washington.

Before the Republicans took over in 1995, spending was going up at a rate of 5.2 percent on an average basis for the last 7 years. Remember, inflation is now at around 3 percent or 2½ percent. So it was going up at almost twice the rate of inflation. Since the Republicans took over, there has been about a 40-percent reduction in the growth of spending.

But is spending still going up? Yes, Government spending is still going up,

and the blue shows the first 7 years of the Republican control. It is still going up at 3.2 percent. So have we completely curtailed or cut Government spending? We have not cut Government spending. We have curtailed the growth of Government spending. Government spending is not going up as rapidly as it was before.

But when we have this discussion about can we still find many areas of Government that are not efficient, where we are wasting or not spending money as wisely as we could? I think the answer is very, very clear. We still have Government spending going up faster than the rate of inflation. Some of us would prefer not to see that, but I do think it is important while we make that point, that we also recognize that great progress has been made.

We have slowed the growth of Government spending by about 40 percent in our first 2 years of control and that, in fact, is what has led to this other picture, where we are not only meeting the targets that we promised the American people, but the actuals, the blue columns, are actually lower than what was promised. That is to say the deficit is significantly lower than what was promised the American people.

The reason for that is that we have been successful in curtailing this growth in Government spending. There is still plenty of opportunities. Maybe the gentleman from Michigan would like to point out a couple of those.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I would love to. Here we go again, I am sure someone is thinking this. Last week we did the debate on the National Endowment for the Arts. We on our side of the aisle had a very good proposal to keep the money in the arts but to attack the inefficiency.

I chair the oversight subcommittee. This is an agency that spends \$99.5 million a year. Only in Washington is that considered not much money. Back in my district that would be a very nice medium-sized company employing 600, 700 people, paying them a good wage. But here in Washington it is not a very big program.

When people from Wisconsin or Michigan send that first dollar to Washington for the National Endowment for the Arts, the first 20 cents goes to bureaucracy and overhead, even though the first 35 percent of the money they hand out is by formula. We could hire an AmeriCorps volunteer for \$27,000 a year, and in the morning they could write out the 50 checks that take care of the 35 percent of the money and then we could find something else for that person to do for the rest of the year.

The first 20 percent goes to overhead, 35 percent gets formula block granted, which we wanted to continue, and then 25 percent of the money goes to one State. Are all the arts concentrated in one area and 143 congressional districts get nothing?

All we said is we want to get rid of the bureaucracy. We want to block

grant the National Endowment for the Arts money, get rid of the Washington establishment, save that \$20 million and take the rest of the \$80 million, block grant it to the States for their State grants, because local people know better how to support the arts in their community, and then fund it for arts education. That was one opportunity.

AmeriCorps is another great one. This is an organization that spends \$600 million of our money and cannot keep its books. It does good work. I mean the young people in that program do good work. They should. The average cost is \$27,000 per year.

Mr. NEUMANN. Are they working full time as they are volunteering at \$27,000 a year?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. At the cost of \$27,000 a year, they are required to serve 1,700 hours.

Mr. NEUMANN. So about three-quarters.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. About three-quarters time. A full-time person is working about 2,000. So somewhere between three-quarters and a little more than that.

Mr. NEUMANN. So the gentleman is saying for \$27,000 a year of cost per volunteer, do I have that right, \$27,000 per volunteer? In Wisconsin we usually think of voluntarism as something someone does because they think it is good for their community, but that cost, they are still not even working a full-time 2,080 hours a year.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. The gentleman is correct. And the disappointing thing here is, and I met with some AmeriCorps volunteers in my district yesterday, and I think they do good things and they will hear me talking tonight and saying they are costing \$27,000, did he not understand we are not getting that money? I know what they are getting paid and what they are getting. The bureaucracy and the overhead and the Washington establishment and all that, that is the big sucking sound, sucking this money away from these kids, away from this program.

What we have to take a look at is that this is an inefficient way to do what we want to get done. It may be a valiant effort, but when the total system is costing us \$27,000, the least we can do, and the least the people on the other side of the aisle can do is join with us and say, number one, the books are not auditable, we should put in a requirement that their books ought to be auditable. We ought to know where the money is going.

We ought to sit down and have a debate, not a debate, because this will be a discussion, how do we get the cost to be more realistic and more effective so that either more young people can participate or we can give some of the money back to the American people in tax reduction or we can start paying down the debt.

Mr. NEUMANN. Is this not sort of a picture of what really is going on out

here in Washington right now? We are looking at these programs and we are finding that in Government spending so much of it is eaten up by this Washington bureaucracy and the dollars are not actually getting out to the people they are designed to help; that the cost is astronomical for what winds up being a very small help out there.

In fact, would these folks not be better off, would the people of America not be better off if, instead of bringing the money out of their pockets down here to Washington and letting the Washington people spend it, if we just let them keep their own money in their own pocket? Would that not be a much better way to handle the situation?

□ 2315

Mr. HOEKSTRA. If the gentleman would yield, we have had this discussion back and forth for the last 3 years or for the 2½ years that you have been here in Washington. But I know that 2½ years ago, we had the discussion on welfare reform. And now that we have passed welfare reform where we actually empowered States, I was a little nervous about bringing up National Endowment for the Arts and Americorps because those were such lightning rods.

But let us talk about some issues that we implemented. Welfare. Remember when we came down here last year and we said in the welfare bill, let us just give Wisconsin the waiver that it wants. Because the person in HHS or wherever who probably does not know what a cheese head is, maybe knows that the Green Bay Packers won the Superbowl.

Mr. NEUMANN. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Would the gentleman yield? Everybody knows that the Green Bay Packers won the Superbowl. Everybody knows that they are headed back there. Everybody knows that the great Governor Tommy Thompson has been largely leading the way on welfare reform, where we in Wisconsin say, if you are able to work, you have a responsibility to take responsibility for your own life and go into the workforce. That has been led by Governor Tommy Thompson.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. And it has been led by Tommy Thompson. We talked about this issue last year; and we said, just let the governor and just let the State legislature in Wisconsin do what they feel needs to be done and what is going to work in Wisconsin.

Because what do the people here on Independence Avenue know about what needs to be done in Milwaukee or Green Bay or Madison? The legislators in Wisconsin, who are closer to the people than what you and I are, they are going to do what is right for their State. So we finally passed welfare reform flexibility. Surprise of all surprise, what is happening? All the reports coming back are saying this appears to be working.

Mr. NEUMANN. If the gentleman would yield, you really hit on something that is so important there. What is there that would lead the people to believe that somehow, some way, just

because you live here inside the Beltway in Washington, DC, you know what is best for the people in the State of Wisconsin.

The welfare reform is a classic example. In Wisconsin they had a debate for about 18 months how this welfare reform should be done. And they wound up with the majority of the Democrats and virtually all of Republicans voting for a welfare reform bill in Wisconsin. And guess what they found out if they passed it? After the people of Wisconsin debated it for 18 months, the vast majority in both houses supporting it, both sides of the aisle supporting it, they then had to somehow come out here to Washington, DC, and ask for permission to implement the program.

That is the heart and soul of what is wrong here. People in Wisconsin know what is best for people in Wisconsin. The solution in Wisconsin may not work at all in New York or it may not work in California, but the folks in Wisconsin know what is best for them and they should be given the privilege, the responsibility, the right to do as they see best for themselves.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. If the gentleman would yield, when we go back and reflect, and I also want to move on to education, but when we reflect back on the welfare debate, when we checked, and I think there were States that had requested waivers for Health and Human Services, they had requested waivers from the bureaucrats in Washington to do what they wanted to do in their State because they thought it was going to help their citizens, some of those waivers I believe had been sitting there for 24 or 36 months. So you have States, Governors, you have legislators in these States who are trying to help their citizens get off of welfare to work, restore dignity to themselves and their families, and we have got bureaucrats here in Washington saying, we really do not know if that is the right thing to do in Wisconsin. We better study this. As a matter of fact, we better study it for 24 months.

Mr. NEUMANN. If the gentleman would yield, would not my colleague say the same thing is true in education? Do we not want the parents of the children to be actively involved in the education of their kids, and do we not want the communities where those parents and children are to make decisions on how we can best educate the kids and what it is those kids should be learning in their hometowns, in their own homes, and in their own communities? Is that not what we should be doing with education?

And what is there again that would lead us to believe that somehow if you manage to get a job inside the Beltway, you become so much wiser than the parents and the people in that community out there? What is there that would lead us to believe that the folks here in Washington, and there are good people out here, but why would we think that they know how to better educate our kids than the people back home in our communities and our own homes?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. If the gentleman would yield, I have been working on a project which we call At a Crossroads. Last year we asked the simple question, when Washington defines "education," what does it mean? It came back, the Washington definition of "education" when we asked the executive branch, 760 programs. And you say, boy.

Mr. NEUMANN. How many programs?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Seven hundred sixty.

Mr. NEUMANN. Now I have got to ask the gentleman a question on this. Do these programs run themselves?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. No. We have a bureaucracy here in Washington, it may not be that big, it is less than 5,000 people. But only again in Washington is a bureaucracy with 5,000 people a small bureaucracy.

We met with the governor of Wisconsin, Tommy Thompson. We talked about education. Forty percent of your employees in the State Department of Education are paid for by Federal dollars. So the Department of Education has actually been pretty smart. They only have 5,000 in Washington. But what they have done is they have filtered it out so that I think in Wisconsin it is 40 percent of the employees of the department are paid by Federal funds. I think in Michigan it gets as high as 60 percent. So they farm team their employees out to do Federal work.

But the key point here is, you go, wow, am I glad, we have got 760 programs. That was a good thing that in 1979 they created the Department of Education so that they could coordinate all 760 of these programs. Right? And you take a look at it and say, wait a minute, all these programs do not go through the Department of Education. They go through 39 different agencies. And say not only that, this is a big number. They spent \$100 billion per year. That is the Washington definition of "education," 760 programs. You got a problem? Throw a program at it, throw a bureaucrat at it, throw some dollars at it and we will fix it. That is not how it works.

The other thing that we have done, and I think we are going to be in Wisconsin for hearings later this year, but we have been in California, in New York, in Cincinnati, we have been in Arkansas, we have gone around the country taking a look at what is working in education, comparing that to the Washington picture of bureaucracy, paperwork, every dollar you send to Washington, maybe 65 cents gets back to the classroom. What works. Parental control, local flexibility.

The best example that I have is Evonne Chan, who the President has highlighted, Evonne Chan. She runs Lavonne Charter School in Los Angeles. She was a principal in a public

school. There are a lot of public schools. I lost my beard because of a great public school in my own district, who went on to become the national champions of the science olympiad. Great work. But in L.A., within the L.A. Unified School District, she said, when I was a public school principal, I had to worry about the three B's. You say, Evonne, what are the three B's? She said, I had to worry about busing, budgets, and the butts. And you you say, what are the butts? She said every time I had an innovative idea, I wanted to do something for the kids that was a little bit out of the ordinary, I went to the L.A. Unified School District and said, these are my kids, they have got special needs, I would like to do this; and they would say, yeah, but if we let you do this, everybody will have to do it.

Mr. NEUMANN. If the gentleman would yield, they are going to tell us we are out of time very shortly, and I just want to bring it back because the "yeah, butts" is what has been going on in this city in the past. When you look back at Gramm-Rudman-Hollings and the failures to keep their promises and when you look back at the tax increases of 1993, yeah, but we cannot control Washington spending, it is easier to take the money away from the people.

Until we got a new group and we have been concentrating here in the present and all these good things that are going on, as we talk about change in education, as we talk about welfare reform, and we talk about being in the third year of a 7-year plan to balance the budget, we are on track, ahead of schedule, reducing taxes for the American people.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I want to thank the gentleman for the time in doing the special order, and I want to reinforce. It is about the numbers. We are still spending over \$1.6 trillion dollars a year.

Now we have got to make sure that the dollars that we are spending, we are getting optimal results for that spending. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. NEUMANN. In wrapping up this evening, I would just like to very briefly focus on the future, because we talked about the past and the failed promises and higher taxes and we talk about the present and how the new group that is here since 1995 is on track and ahead of schedule and taxes coming down.

The future includes us also dealing with the debt that has been run up over the last 15 years. And later this week, we will be introducing a bill called the National Debt Repayment Act. The National Debt Repayment Act would literally pay off the entire Federal debt by the year 2026. It simply says that after the budget is balanced, we cap the growth of Government spending at a rate 1 percent lower than the rate of revenue growth and that will create a surplus. Of this surplus, one-third gets

used for additional tax cuts, two-thirds goes to repay the Federal debt.

What a nice thought it would be to pass this Nation on to our children debt free by the year 2026. Of course, as we repay the Federal debt, we are also putting the money back into the Social Security trust fund. For those who have not followed it, the trust fund collects more money than it pays back out in benefits each year, but the money has been spent on all sorts of other Government programs. And what is in the trust fund today is all part of that \$5.3 trillion debt, it is IOU's.

So if the National Debt Repayment Act, now the future, after the budget is balanced, the next step is starting to pay down the Federal debt so that we can pass this Nation on to our children debt free. What a wonderful, wonderful thought for the future of this country so they do not have to send \$500 a month out to Washington to do nothing but pay interest on the Federal debt.

And at the same time we do that, we put the money back into the Social Security Trust Fund so Social Security is no longer on the verge of bankruptcy and our seniors can rest assured that their Social Security money is safe and secure.

To conclude this evening, I would just again emphasize how much this place has changed in the last 3 years, where we are at today. The budget is virtually balanced. It may be balanced within the next 6 months, maybe the next year, but certainly on the very near term a balanced budget. Medicare is restored. And taxes are coming down for the American people. And I guess that is the best way to wrap this up. It is about the families out there and it is about the impact of lower taxes. It is about a secure future for our children as the debt is repaid and we start doing things that are right for our country, and it is about a secure future for our senior citizens to know that Medicare has been restored and to know that as we pass the National Debt Repayment Act, it also restores Social Security so our seniors can be assured once again that Social Security is safe. And most important of all, future generations of Americans will not be saddled with the burden of our generation, we will have done what is right for the future of this great Nation that we live in.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today and on July 16, on account of medical reasons.

Ms. ESHOO (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today before 8:45 p.m., on account of airline equipment problems.

Ms. WOOLSEY, (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today before 8:45 p.m., on account of airline equipment problems.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HOEKSTRA) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SEXTON, for 5 minutes each day, today and on July 16 and 17.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan, for 5 minutes each day, today and July 16.

Mr. HOEKSTRA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. TIAHRT, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KUCINICH, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BENTSEN, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous matter:)

Mr. ETHERIDGE.

Mr. LANTOS.

Mr. BLUMENAUER.

Ms. STABENOW.

Mr. MCDERMOTT.

Mr. BENTSEN.

Mr. ENGEL.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HOEKSTRA) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous matter:)

Mr. GILMAN.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

Mr. BOB SCHAFER of Colorado.

Mr. BONO.

Mr. SHAYS.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HOEKSTRA) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan.

Mr. CLYBURN.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York.

Mr. CONYERS.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 231. An act to establish the National Cave and Karst Research Institute in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Resources.

S. 423. An act to extend the legislative authority for the Board of Regents of Gunston Hall to establish a memorial to honor George Mason; to the Committee on Resources.

S. 669. An act to provide for the acquisition of the Plains Railroad Depot at the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site; to the Committee on Resources.